

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-5) spoke on the House Floor today urging House Republicans to drop opposition to middle-class tax cuts and work with Democrats on the Senate compromise bill to extend middle-class tax cuts, extend unemployment assistance, and fix the Medicare physician payment rate. Congressman Hoyer introduced a Motion to Instruct Conferees, which asks conferees to accept the Senate compromise bill. Below are his remarks and a link to the video.

[Click here to watch the video.](#)

“It is December 20th, and the Republicans are using it as a day to dissemble, pretending to support a tax cut for working Americans, while making it uncertain and delayed. We – of course, as we all know – could pass the Senate bill by 2pm today, send it to the President, and provide certainty to working Americans, come January 1st, that their taxes will not go up.

“The choice I suggest to all of you is not between sixty days and one year. At least we all say one year – we’re all for one year and will support it. But we know the Senate won’t agree, so they sent us sixty days. Instead, House Republicans refuse to even bring the Senate’s bipartisan compromise to the Floor. Eighty-nine U.S. Senators voted for a compromise, but you will not bring it to the Floor, and you create uncertainty and anxiety among the public. That is shameful and disappointing.

“As a result, on January 1st, if there is no agreement, those of you who vote to send it to conference will be responsible for 160 million Americans seeing their taxes increase next year; for 2.3 million people seeking jobs who will lose their unemployment lifeline by mid-February; and for 48 million Americans having their access to doctors placed in jeopardy. Those are the stakes.

“America thought we had an agreement this weekend. John McCain thought we had an agreement this weekend. And yes, Speaker Boehner thought we had an agreement this weekend. America thought there was reason to hope that middle-class Americans would be

spared this entirely preventable tax increase. I tell you my friends: if this were an upper-income increase, it would pass like lightning, but – no – this is about putting in jeopardy a middle-class tax cut, and we can play games with that.

“We are now witnessing the concluding convulsion of confrontation and obstruction in this most unproductive, Tea Party-dominated, partisan session of Congress. As a result, Speaker Boehner decided he wasn’t for the agreement. But Speaker Boehner, six months ago, called proposals to extend the tax cut by a year – ‘another little short-term gimmick.’ It’s the same rhetoric but different circumstances.

“In Senate Republican leader McConnell’s own words, this compromise was ‘designed to pass.’ In fact the bill you passed – and you knew it – was designed to fail, and Republicans in the Senate knew it and rejected it. It did so in the Senate – that bill that was designed to pass - with overwhelming support from 83 percent of Republicans and almost every Democrat, including the entire Senate Republican and the entire Democratic leadership.

“Democrats, Mr. Speaker, are fighting to prevent a painful tax increase for the middle class. The way to do that is to pass the Senate compromise while we continue to work on a year-long extension. That’s what Senator Reid said he’d do – that’s what we want to do. We don’t want to put Americans at risk, come January 1.

“If they fail to pass the compromise, House Republicans will have to answer to the American people whose taxes will go up, to the innocent unemployed and the Medicare seniors seeking services from their doctors. We must not leave this work unfinished just days before the holidays and new year. That’s what the Senate did – they gave us time – gave American people time. Instead, we ought to be bringing relief to middle-class families that are increasingly anxious about their future during what should be a joyful and hopeful holiday season. We ought to pass the bipartisan Senate bill.

“That’s what this motion to instruct says. That is what the American people want to happen in Washington – to see us work together. Come to agreement. Act. Bring certainty. Stop the blame game.

“We can send the bipartisan agreement to the president today, and he will sign it. Vote ‘yes’ on

the motion to instruct. Vote for the American workers, Medicare recipients, and the unemployed.”